

Know Your Resources: Nonparent Caregiver Benefits



Office of Children
and Family Services

Office of Temporary
and Disability Assistance

Who Are Nonparent Caregivers?

Nonparent caregivers, commonly called kinship caregivers, are adults who are caring for children living in their home without their parent. If you are a nonparent caregiver, you may be eligible for financial assistance and other supports described in this brochure.

The **eligibility** requirements of these benefits or supports and the benefit amounts vary depending on many factors. Some of the factors considered may include whether you are related to the children, whether the child has income, (including but not limited to Social Security Disability, or survivor benefits) who else lives with you, and whether you receive other benefits and services.

In some cases, receipt of a nonparent caregiver grant may count as household income and could affect eligibility or the amount of benefits listed below.

The only way to verify eligibility is to apply. Remember—when in doubt, apply! The Kinship Navigator is also available to assist you by calling 1-877-454-6463 or at www.nysnavigator.org.

Find the Statewide Common Application at
<http://otda.ny.gov/programs/applications/2921.pdf>

Temporary Assistance (TA) Nonparent Caregiver Cases

If you have a child living with you who is not your child, and the child's parent does not live with you, you may apply for Temporary Assistance (TA) on behalf of that child. This type of TA case is called a "nonparent caregiver case" or "child only" (check with your county to determine the name). The nonparent caregiver case provides a cash grant to be used for the care of the child.

In general, your income and resources will not be considered when determining a child's eligibility unless you are also applying for TA for yourself. However, you should discuss your specific circumstances with a local department of social services TA worker. To apply you must complete an **LDSS-2921**, *New York State Application for Certain Benefits and Services*. If you are a relative and not applying for TA, then information about your income and resources will be collected solely for federal reporting requirements.

When applying on behalf of a child, you do **not** need

- court-ordered custody or guardianship;
- to participate in work activities as a condition of receiving the grant, unless you are also applying for TA for yourself; or
- to take part in drug/alcohol screenings (unless you are also applying for TA for yourself).

You are required to work with the child support enforcement unit within the department of social services for any child for whom you are applying for TA. If you are afraid that the parent for whom you are trying to get child support will hurt you or the child, you should let your TA worker know — you may be eligible for a “good cause” exemption from pursuing child support.

Child Care Assistance

Child care assistance may help you pay for some or all of the cost of child care services. In general, families are eligible for child care assistance if they meet the state's low-income guidelines and need child care to work, look for work, or attend employment training. When an eligible child resides with individuals who are not:

- the child's parent,
- stepparent,
- the child's adoptive parent, or
- the child's legal guardian with financial responsibility for the child.

Then child care assistance eligibility will be determined for the child only. In this situation, only the eligible child's income, not yours, would be used to determine eligibility for child care assistance. In some cases, you may be required to pay a fee towards child care. This will be determined by the child care benefits available in your county of residence.

Families receiving child care assistance can choose from licensed, registered, or enrolled legally exempt child care programs. There is more information about child care options on the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) website, which includes a search for child care (<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/looking.asp>) and information on how you can contact local child care resource and referral agencies (<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/brochure.asp>).

To apply, contact your LDSS (<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/localdss.asp>).

Learn more about child care options at
<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/>

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

When choosing a child care program, look for one that participates in CACFP. These centers or home day care providers will serve your child nutritious meals or snacks at no charge to you.

Learn more about CACFP by visiting
www.health.ny.gov/cacfp

Medicaid

Medicaid is a program for people whose income and/or resources are below certain levels.

To apply for Medicaid for the child, you only need proof of your identity. You, as the nonparent caretaker, do not need to disclose your own income unless you apply for Medicaid for the child and yourself.



Children determined to be eligible for TA in a nonparent caregiver case are eligible for Medicaid. Applications may be made for both TA and Medicaid using **LDSS-2921**, *Application for Certain Benefits and Services*.

Learn more about Medicaid at
https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/

Nutrition Programs

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

This kind of help is often called “food stamps.” SNAP benefits are accessed on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, similar to a bank debit card or credit card.

A SNAP budget must be calculated for your household to determine eligibility and the benefit amount. The child in your care will usually be counted as part of your household. You may apply by completing an **LDSS-2921**, *Application for Certain Benefits and Services*, and an **LDSS-4826**,

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Application/Recertification, or online at mybenefits.ny.gov.

Learn more about SNAP at
<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/snap/>

School Breakfast and Lunch Programs

School breakfast and lunch programs provide free, reduced-price or full-priced meals at participating schools throughout New York State. All children attending schools that offer these programs can participate. Some children qualify for free or reduced-price meals; some pay depending on family size and income. Children receiving New York State benefits such as many of those listed here are eligible for free meals.



You may apply at any time during the school year. Information about family size, income, and sources of income are required. The school will notify you as to the child's eligibility status (free, reduced-price or full-price meals).

You should contact your school or school district to find out how to receive free or reduced-price meals.

General information about the school breakfast program can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp>

General information about the school lunch program can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

**Learn more about school breakfast and lunch programs at
<http://www.cn.nysed.gov>**

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

WIC provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals for other services. WIC food benefits will continue to be available through an electronic benefit transfer (eWIC) card.



If you are caring for a child under the age of 5, are pregnant, or recently had a child, you may be eligible for WIC. To qualify, your household must meet the income eligibility guidelines or receive SNAP, Medicaid, or TA.

**Contact your local WIC agency to make an appointment.
To find a WIC clinic near you, call the
Growing Up Healthy Hotline at 1-800-522-5006 or
download the mobile app, WIC2Go.**

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

HEAP may be able to help meet your home energy needs. HEAP benefits vary depending on household income, the type of fuel the household uses, and the presence of a vulnerable household member. You may be eligible for a regular HEAP benefit even if you have assets such as some money in the bank or other financial resources.

HEAP benefits may also be available for heat-related emergencies, heating equipment repair and replacement, heating equipment cleanup and tune up, and cooling assistance.

If any of your household members receives the help below, then the household is usually eligible for HEAP.

- TA (Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance)
- SNAP
- Code A Supplemental Security Income

You can apply for a regular HEAP benefit the following ways:

In Person: You can apply at your local department of social services.

By Phone or Mail: You can call your local department of social services and ask them to mail you a HEAP application or you can download and mail-in a HEAP application (visit: otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/apply).

Online: If you live outside New York City, you can visit: [myBenefits.ny.gov](https://mybenefits.ny.gov) to apply online. Within New York City you can visit: ACCESS.NYC.gov to download an application.

Learn more about HEAP online from NYS OTDA at
<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/>

Helpful Information

If you live in New York City, you can apply at an HRA Job Center. If you do not live in New York City, you can apply at your local county department of social services.

Many benefits have separate applications you may use if you are only applying for that benefit. Contact your local department of social services or HRA office to inquire about the application process for a specific benefit.

Other supportive services are provided by non-profit organizations and the aging network. To find out more, visit <https://ocfs.ny.gov/kinship/>.

Find out which benefits you may be eligible at mybenefits.ny.gov.

For additional resources and services, visit:

- The New York State Office of Children and Family Services webpage at ocfs.ny.gov/kinship/map.asp for a list of local kinship services and regional Permanency Resource Centers (PRCs).
- The NYS Kinship Navigator webpage at www.nysnavigator.org or call: **1-877-454-6463**. The Kinship Navigator provides information and referrals for kinship caregivers across all of New York State.

To learn more about options for providing kinship care, including how to become a foster parent and other care options, see the publication, *Make an Informed Choice: Kin Caring for Children*, **Pub. 5120**, which can be found at www.ocfs.ny.gov by searching the “publication” section of the OCFS homepage.

To see if your local department of social services offers supportive services for nonparent caregivers you can contact them at <https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.aspxhttps://mybenefits.ny.gov/mybenefits/begin>



**Office of Children
and Family Services**

**Office of Temporary
and Disability Assistance**

Capital View Office Park
52 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144

Visit our website at:

ocfs.ny.gov

For foster care and
adoption information, call:
1-800-345-KIDS (5437)

OCFS HEARS Family Line
(Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure and Support)
1-888-55HEARS (1-888-554-3277)
Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

To report child abuse and
maltreatment, call:
1-800-342-3720

New York State Vulnerable Persons' Central Register
(VPCR) Hotline at:
1-855-373-2122

For information on the
Abandoned Infant Protection Act call:
1-866-505-SAFE (7233)

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call your
Video Relay System provider and ask to be connected
to the telephone number you wish to reach.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the
New York State Office of Children and Family Services
will make this material available in an appropriate
format upon request.